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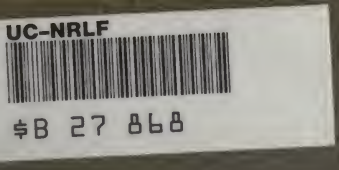

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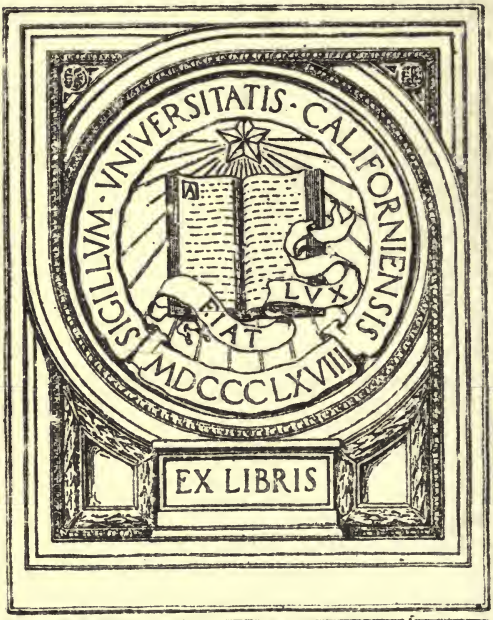

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The Toll of the Mills

and Other Poems

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

By Mrs. Cora Bates

INTRODUCTORY

This little book suggests a way
To find a brighter, better day.
There's too much sordid strife for gain,
There's too much sorrow, grief and pain.
Too much insanity and woe—
The road's too rough o'er which we go.
Humanity needs hope and cheer.
Suggestions which I give you here
Will help to smooth the rugged road,
Assist you all to bear your load.
Nothing so fills the soul with grace
As love for all the human race;
Especially the poor and weak,
Who Fortune's favor vainly seek.
I've followed the insistent call
To place this book in reach of all;
And to the people of all climes
I dedicate my book of rhymes.

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THE TOLL OF THE MILLS

(A true story.)

A little boy with waving locks,
  Black as a raven's wing,
Was skipping down a city street,
  And a song you could hear him sing;
For a half-holiday he was now to take,
  Away from the factory's din.

Just eleven summers this bonny boy,
  With his eyes of dancing brown,
Had played in the streets and had gone to school
  In this busy New York town;
And now the factory claimed his time
  For many a busy round.

Five years roll by, and we meet him again
  As he carries the molten steel,
Week in, week out, 'till months and years
  His youthful vigor steal;
And the boyish shoulders droop and bend
  And the story sad reveal

Of over-work and nutrition poor,
  That take from labor's son,
His God-given strength and buoyancy
  Ere manhood has begun,
And set him adrift on life's rough sea,
  With no strength the race to run.

Maimed by a cruel bar of steel—
  But no damage could he claim;
For labor cannot afford to pay
  The costs in a losing game;
So he left the mills and to seek for work,
  To the Golden State he came.

His father, mid Alpine beauty reared,
  Was the son of rural toil,
And his mother, from vineyards of sunny France,
  Had taught him to love the soil,
The birds, the flowers and all things pure,
  Away from the town's turmoil.

So he sought for work on a farm, and soon
He was tossing the new-mown hay,
In the fields so green where Pacific's waves
Meet the waters of the bay—
Where the sea gulls winged their circling flight,
And sped from the shore away.

But the withering curse of the Eastern mills,
The factory's awful blight,
Still followed him to this Western shore,
And struggle as best he might,
Grim hunger wasted the manly form
And changed his day to night.

In a hospital out by the Western sea,
With health and hope all fled,
The physical wreck of a stalwart man
Lies helpless upon his bed,
Heart broken and lonely the weary weeks
He endures with nameless dread.

The drooping shoulders, the eyes of brown,
The waving raven hair,
Are those of the lad we met before
In that Eastern city where
His father and mother were laid to rest,
And his brother and sister fair.

O, could you come from the spirit world,
Dear mother, and see your son
In his early manhood stricken low,
The sands of life most run,
You would yearn for someone to help your child,
Ere life's short day is done.

Who will go to the lonely ward
Where the sick and dying pine,
For a mother's sympathy and love,
For a mother's touch divine,
And cheer this helpless, friendless one
Ere he leaves the shore of time?

SEQUEL TO "THE TOLL OF THE MILLS"

They took him away from the dreary ward
To a quiet country place,
Where birds and flowers and children fair
From his memory erased

The thoughts of sorrow and sighs and death,
And slowly his strength returned;
His ambitious spirit once more prevailed,
And bodily weakness spurned.

And happily forth again he went,
Builder and painter in one;
Friends gave employment and wages good,
And praise for work well done.

But the eager spirit and willing hands,
And the ever-active brain,
Drove all too fast the faltering heart,
And the hospital doors again

Swung open an invalid to receive,
Disheartened and sick and sad,
And the doctors told him quite frankly then
That no slight chance he had.

Those long-drawn sighs and bitter groans,
As he struggled for his breath,
Were caused by the pain of living,
And not by the dread of death.

But what is this? Is it just a dream—
A thought of the fevered brain?
This blessed relief that has come again
From mental and physical pain.

In a pleasant home on a quiet street,
Away from groans and sighs,
Our hero of the Eastern mills
In convalescence lies.

But very near to the gates of death
He lay for many a day,
And here are a few of the thoughtful things
That his nurses heard him say:

"One thing before I die I hope
The Lord will let me see—
A vision of peace and prosperity,
In the lands beyond the sea.

"The Allies all with the Germans,
Shake hands and call it squared,
While homes for the widows and orphans
I would like to see prepared.

"And I wish you would write to a friend of mine,
That I bear him no ill-will,
Though a disagreement we have had,
He may think I'm unfriendly still.

"I hear the whistles, it's seven o'clock;
I hate to hear them blow,
For it means that men, whether sick or well,
To their arduous tasks must go.

"For if they miss but a single hour,
In the early morn, you see,
Their job will be given to some one else,
And penniless they will be.

"See the butcher's boy, with his tired horse,
A-tearing along the street—
Folks have no mercy upon a horse,
When they're late in ordering meat.

"There's the postman climbing those flights of steps,
With his tired legs and feet—
If the mail boxes lower down were placed,
He could reach them from the street.

"I like to watch that huckster feed
His team across the way,
The birds hop 'round while he stands and pats
The black and then the bay.

"I never enjoyed the menagerie,
For I couldn't bear to see,
The animals caged with iron bars,
When they're used to roaming free.

"Last night in my dreams I was back again
To a little boy of four,
And my grandmother held me as she did
A thousand times or more.

"She put in my hand an apple small,
And in sweetest tones she said:
'I'm sorry it isn't a big one, dear,
All ripe, and mellow, and red.

" 'Never mind, Freddie, some day we'll go
To the beautiful land of France,
And live once more in our own chateau,
It may be so perchance.

" 'Your mother's grandfather was rich, you know,
But the Revolution came,
And he was banished to foreign lands
And the church of Notre Dame

" 'Got all his wealth through a great mistake,
But some day they'll make it right;
And then we will have a lovely home,
In a land so warm and bright.

" 'And maybe we'll go to Switzerland,
Where your father laughed and played,
As he drove to pasture his father's cows,
Or through the woodland strayed.'

"I'm sorry 'twas just a dream, for then
I was never weak nor sick;
I was well and strong till my teacher beat
My spine with that heavy stick.

"Then the work in the mills was hard, you know,
The steel was heavy to lift,
And often rather than lose my job
I worked an extra shift.

"Then my grandmother died and my mother, too,
And I knew there was not a chance,
That I ever would see the old chateau,
In the pleasant land of France.

"And Constance Lake and Geneva, too,
In the beautiful Alpine hills,
Faded away like the closing day,
And were lost in the roar of the mills.

"Then sadness and desolation filled
My heart as I drifted West,
With spinal trouble and nerves unstrung,
But there—you know the rest."

And then once more in the sunshine warm,
Of the beautiful spring so gay,
Where the level green of Del Paso plains
In beauty stretched away,

He walked again in the open air,
And enjoyed the birds and flowers,
'Till the grass turned brown and the flowers died,
From need of refreshing showers.

Then his spirits sank and he took his bed,
No more to be up again,
To his kindly physician he said, " 'Tis best,
Just let me die free from pain."

And the thoughtful neighbors and children came,
Beguiling with fruit and flowers,
And with genuine Christian sympathy,
The painless but wearisome hours.

Like a guard defending a massive tower,
Whose broken pillars stand
A monument to the graft and greed
Of the spoilers of the land,

So his soul still clung to the giant form,
Nor heeded the call of death,
So loath to depart from that temple grand,
Of which it had been the breath.

One lovely morning in early May,
While the grass was bright with dew,
Two dear little birds that he loved so well,
To his open window flew,

And chirped and fluttered and sailed away
As he said, "I am sinking fast."
And heavenly smiles as they watched him there,
O'er his classical features passed.

Conscious again he spoke and said,
"Such beautiful singing I heard;
It sounded so sweet and so far away,
But 'twas not the song of a bird."

"The Desire of Ages," a neighbor brought—
He rallied and read each day.
"Why Weepest Thou?" looked from the open page,
As his spirit passed away.

The thought he expressed when last he spoke,
In accents soft and mild,
Was characteristic solicitude
For the health of a little child.

The expressive eyes in death were closed—
He was free from all earthly ills.
In pathos and pain, his life had paid
The terrible toll of the mills.

They sang the hymns that he'd often sung—
The ones he had loved the best,
And stranger friends, in an honored grave
Laid him away to rest.

THE DESERT FLOWER

'Twas just a little desert flower,
Blooming on the plain,
And never had it known a shower
Of cool, refreshing rain.

Its struggle for existence there
Nobody cared or knew.
All 'round the ground was dry and bare,
While scorching south winds blew.

A village maiden passed that way,
And saw the little flower;
She'd come from where the roses gay
Graced many a lavish bower.

"O, precious little flower," she said,
"There blooming in the sand,
You have no loamy, mossy bed
In which your roots expand.

"You've not the grand and gorgeous dyes—
Rich purple, red and green,
But you're more lovely in my eyes
Than any flower I've seen.

"Your little, slender stem of brown,
Your little star of blue,
Some little rootlets reaching down—
That's all there is of you.

"You'd not add much to my bouquet
Of blossoms such a host,
So little flower, you'd better stay
Where you are needed most.

"The butterflies and roaming bees
Would miss you were you gone.
The morning wind and evening breeze
Would sing a mournful song."

She bade the little flower good-bye,
And slowly went her way.
"A little desert flower am I,"
The south wind heard her say.

"So many times I wish and long
For privilege to stand,
Among the gay and favored throng,
The noblesse of the land.

"But like the little flower of blue,
I will be satisfied,
To stay where I am needed, too,
Valued and loved beside."

WAR AND "BRUVVER" JIM

What made 'em shoot my bruvver,
  When he went away to war?
An' can't he get alive again?
  Won't he come home no more?

I can't dig in the sandpile,
  Nor play wif this big ball;
For lumps keep comin' in my froat—
  I can't be glad at all.

Aunt Sarah says the brave mans
  Must all go out an' fight.
What makes 'em make the brave mans dead?
  Ain't bein' brave all right?

I needed my big bruvver,
  'Cause he was not afraid.
He saw the snake 'at tried to bite,
  An' killed it wif a spade.

An' when the barn burned up he got
  The horses all away,
An' saved the hired man 'at was
  A sleepin' in the hay.

An' when it rained an' thundered,
  An' the dark was awful thick,
He went an' got the doctor
  When little Fred was sick.

I wish we had some apples,
  I likes 'em awful well.
Big bruvver used to buy 'em
  From the man 'at comes to sell.

An' Fred he cries for lots of fings
  We can't get at the store,
'Cause papa's sick and bruvver,
  He never comes no more.

When bruvver went a-marchin',
  They said, "God save the King!"
Will God save poor, sick papa, too,
  An' get us everyfing?

An' is the King all sorry,
  Wif lumps a-chokin' him?
Will he be kind and good to us,
  Instead of Bruvver Jim?

I wish that they had never had
  This wicked, awful war,
For if I cry forever,
  Jim won't come home no more.

TIGHT-WAD

Some people are afraid of snakes,
Some tremble at a mouse;
Some fear to go in broad daylight,
Into a "haunted" house.
By some each harmless little cur,
A mad dog fierce is styled,
But the appellation "Tight-wad,"
Scares countless thousands wild.

How does this awful "Tight-wad" look
As through the world he goes?
He always has enough to eat,
And wears good, decent clothes.
He's bright and clean and wholesome,
And he seldom wears a frown,
And he's absolutely never broke,
Nor "all in, out and down."

I know a tight-wad farmer,
And when he goes to town,
They don't go with him to the bar,
Nor tag him up and down.
He goes about his business,
He pays each honest debt;
He lets nobody "do" him,
And he never makes a bet.

If a fellow's cold or hungry,
He's the one who helps him out;
But he's not the one to treat the crowd,
And throw his "plunks" about.
And those who call him "Tight-wad"
Are just the chaps, you know,
Who want to have a good time
On the other fellow's dough.

MY LITTLE BOY

O, what a lonely, cheerless day!
My little boy has gone away.
I didn't think so soon as this
His presence I'd so sorely miss.

I watched him as he sat astride
His little pony, saw him ride
Along the snow-clad trail so white,
A-down the hill and out of sight.

I clear the breakfast things away;
There scarcely touched his hotcakes lay.
To catch the train he'd "sure be late"—
He must have had an hour to wait.

The little sled sits idly by,
That down the slope is wont to fly;
His pony wanders up the lane,
Across the field and back again.

His pigeons, sitting in a row
Upon the barn roof watched him go;
They seem to miss the little man,
Who fed them oft from out his hand.

'Tis not as though he'd gone to roam
Afar and leave his mountain home.
He loves each pine and living thing,
And when school closes in the spring,

My bonny boy once more will be
Climbing his native hills with me;
Picking the lovely mountain flowers
To while away the summer hours.

GIVE THE DEVIL HIS DUE

O, did it ever occur to you,
That you didn't give the devil his due?
It's bad enough that he's black and fierce,
With proverbial pitchfork ready to pierce
The hapless youth or the grown up man,
Or anybody he possibly can.
On Sunday you sneeze with a big "che-heek!"
"The devil will chase you the whole of the week."
The devil does this, and the devil does that,
And the devil is sure in the big black cat,
That rides through the air on the witch's broom,
Or meows at night in a lonely room.
You are always afraid that he's after you,
And that "fear hath torment" is certainly true.
Keep busy loving your friends and foes,
And doing for those who have cares and woes,
The devil will keep in the background far,
And will let you alone wherever you are.
For the time when the devil gets after you,
Is when you have nothing good to do.
Many things are wrong, both great and small,
That are not the fault of the devil at all.
His Satanic majesty did not exist,
When Neptune and Venus were put on the list
With the greater planets and small ones, too,
That are bound to influence me and you.
It doesn't take somebody over-wise,
If he will but open his ears and eyes,
To see that good people may not agree,
Though conscientious they both may be.
This fact of science you cannot deride—
That the old moon causes the ocean's tide;
And if the ocean, so great and grand,
Will rise and fall at the moon's command,
Why shouldn't such atoms as you and me,
Influenced by the planets be?
When the dear little children are peevish and cross,
And seemingly do not want you for a boss,
Don't say it's the devil, but cause them to laugh

By putting them into a good, warm bath.
When you're nervous and cranky and blue yourself,
Don't credit the devil, but look to your health.
Fresh air and contentment, good-will to mankind,
Will leave all the devils in hades behind.
And when your friends censure and misunderstand,
Don't say that the devil leads them by the hand;
But that Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, or Mars,
Or the big Milky Way, with its millions of stars,
Cause antagonistic their feelings to be.
Sentimental and sensible doctrine, you see.
Don't hate the poor devil; feel sad for his fate,
Though Christ said resist him, He never meant hate.
If you hate the devil, you hate the man
Whom you think is ruled by his command.
And as this old world you meander through,
Be sure to give the devil his due.

THE BOY AND THE FARM

Poor little kitty, I feel so sad
'Cause you're hurted an' hungry an' cold,
An' your fur's so rough an' your bones so sharp,
An' it makes you look so old.
Kitties ought to be fat an' soft an' sleek,
But I love you just the same;
An' I can't love the people that treat you mean,
An' make you all sick an' lame.

You couldn't get any mouses at all
'Cause the granary was all shut tight,
An' they didn't give you a fing to eat—
Not a wee little, measly bite.
Then they kicked your stomach an' hurted you bad,
'Cause you stole a wee piece of meat;
An' I know God intended for kitties to have
Milk to drink an' somefing to eat.

I don't like to live on the farm at all,
'Cause the ammals ain't happy here;
The horses get kicked an' whipped an' 'bused,
An' I think it's awful queer,
'Cause they work so hard an' are 'ist as good,
An' so are the cows an' sheep;
But they don't have water an' feed enough,
An' no warm place to sleep.

I'll live in the city when I'm a man,
Tho' the farm is best for me,
So I won't be mean to the horses an' cows,
'Cause I won't have none, you see.
I'll get me a great big automobile,
With no feelin's that I can harm,
An' when folks ask I can tell 'em why
Some boys don't stay on the farm.

BURY ME UNDER THE ELMS

Out into the world he decided to roam,
Saying farewell to father, to mother and home.
He wanted no counsel, no mother's advice,
For fame and a fortune he'd win in a trice.

His fond mother wept as she bade him good-bye,
But he passed from her presence without e'en a sigh;
And down through the orchard and up the old lane,
She watched him, her heart full of lingering pain.

O, little he dreamed, as he traversed that day
The road to the city some distance away,
That the shabby old farm house and mother so plain,
Would shelter and soothe him in sickness and shame.

So bright seemed the morning that even the breeze,
Swinging gently the songsters that sat in the trees,
Whispered softly of liberty, freedom and wealth,
Of love and of luxury, pleasure and health.

His friends in the city were jolly and gay—
They squandered his money and led him away
From honor and virtue, then left him alone,
Besotted and sick, but ashamed to go home.

One day as the snow whirled in gusts through the street,
With a brain dazed and reeling, with nothing to eat,
A wreck of young manhood, most pitiful sight,
He was fast being wrapped in the mantle of white.

A farmer drove by in an old-fashioned sleigh—
"Whoa, Dexter! Whoa, Pacer! What's that in your way?
A man, if I live! O, my God, 'tis my son!
So faint and exhausted, so addled by rum!"

He took him once more to the home he had left,
Where mother so patient, with fingers so deft,
Watched by his bedside, with hopes that were vain,
For the health he had forfeited ne'er came again.

"Dear mother," he faltered, "God pardons my sin.
O, can you forgive the disgrace I have been?
I love the old farm, but alas! 'tis too late;
So bury me under the elms by the gate."

THE SWEET AND THE BITTER

I heard a sweet bird in the gloaming,
  Singing its evening song.
Its happy notes rang through the stillness,
  "O, nothing is missing or wrong;
My mate and our nestlings so cozy
  Are at rest in our nest in the tree,
The whole world is gorgeous and rosy,
  Our lives are so joyous and free."

But I thought of the bird on the willow—
  No song warbles out of his throat,
No ecstasy swells in his bosom,
  I hear but a faint little note
So plaintive, so woeful, so bitter,
  Such anguish he cannot express,
For dead are his mate and their nestlings—
  Destroyed in their beautiful nest.

I saw a sweet girl in the garden
  Plucking roses at setting of sun,
To beguile the still hours of the evening,
  When her tasks of the day were all done.
The sprays that she clipped from the bushes,
  With beauty and fragrance were rife,
Like the dreams and the hopes of the maiden
  In the beautiful spring-time of life.

But I thought of the girl in the factory,
  The slave of the spindle and wheel,
As she grinds out her life for a pittance,
  With no one to care for her weal.
The hot, stifling air of the sweat-shop,
  The succession of wearisome days,
Bring no hope of aught but the trifle
  That the owner and manager pays.

I saw a dear boy going homeward
From the field at the close of the day,
Where at work side by side with his father,
He was shocking the sweet-scented hay.
His gay whistle stirred the pure ether,
As briskly he trudged by the side
Of the cheerful and sensible farmer,
Whose boy was his hope and his pride.

But I thought of the boy in the prison,
His youthful life blotted and stained,
For crime by some other promoted—
By unfeeling justice arraigned;
Shut away from the air and the sunlight,
The monotonous, maddening grind
Will leave for so long as life lingers,
Their impress on body and mind.

Sing on, little bird, in the twilight!
Cheer the world with your song while you may!
Be happy, dear girl in the garden,
And the boy who is tossing the hay.
But remember the girl at the spindle,
The boy in the gloom of the cell,
And when for yourselves you are planning,
Take a thought for their welfare as well.

OUR LITTLE ONES

Sweet innocents that come to bless our lives—
  Without their presence is no home complete.
Our daily prayer should be for wisdom rare
  To guide o'er untried ways the little feet.

We love each tiny, dainty finger-nail,
  Each silken hair that crowns the little head.
With joy we watch the dimples come and go,
  And smiles that o'er the baby features spread.

We wonder as we watch the little hands,
  And feel the tiny fingers clasp our own,
What will in future years their life work be,
  When to their full proportions they have grown?

While thinking thus, with such solicitude,
  Upon the future welfare of our own,
We would remember there are little babes
  Left friendless in this cruel world alone,

Without a mother's tender, watchful care,
  Or e'en a friend, save one who dwells above,
Tho' they, as well as our sweet babes, were once
  The objects of a mother's fondest love.

Since Death has claimed those mothers for his own,
  While we are spared the joys of life and love,
Let us the cry of helpless childhood heed,
  And thus our gratitude to heaven prove.

THE EXORBITANT PRICE

The dreary night was drawing to its close,
But long before the sun in splendor rose,
A little woman, haggard-faced and pale,
With drooping shoulders marking her as frail,
Was sewing by the waxing morning light;
Her eyes had not been closed throughout the night.

Then soft she walked across the wooden floor,
And opened carefully a bed-room door.
"Mildred," she said, "come now and dress the boys,
And don't wake little sister with the noise.
She's been so sick all night, the precious one,
Her cough's so bad, I fear the worst will come.
Now, daughter, come, you must be helping me.
I look so pale, you'll make a cup of tea?
There is no tea. We must not borrow, dear,
We'll not be able to repay, I fear.

"I'll make the best of it; now I must sew,
While little sister sleeps; tonight, you know,
That lady wants her evening dress to wear,
And I must finish it, with haste and care.
O, there! The baby has another spell
Of coughing. Yes, I know it very well—
That she is getting worse from day to day.
If I could do more work and get more pay,
I'd get for her some food more nourishing;
I'd wash or sew or do most anything.

"Yes, babe, I know that coughing hurts you so.
Come, Mildred, carry sister to and fro.
I know your back's too slender for the task,
I'm sure that it will weaken you at last.
But maybe better times some day will come—
The boys grow up and bring their wages home.
I hope saloons will all be closed by then,
For they're the ruin of so many men.

"Yes, dear, I know it is the first of May,
And you're entitled to a holiday.
You surely need the pleasant, outdoor air,
But I have not five cents to pay your fare.

Besides, what could I do if you were gone?
The sewing goes so slow; the day wears on.
Dear Mildred, I don't know what I would do
In all my trouble were it not for you."

Then resolutely choking tears and sighs—
For her young daughter's sake she dried her eyes,
And to her task her energies she bent,
Using the strength that desperation lent.

Night came again, and with the setting sun,
By arduous over-strain the dress was done.
"O, mamma, when the lady comes tonight,
May I tell her of little sister's plight?
She's rich, and she might pay you more, you know,
If she knew baby's sick and coughing so."

"No, Mildred, take the boys and go away.
You'll have at least a little while to play.
The boys have nothing good to wear; you see,
She mustn't know we're in such poverty.
If she should see our want, I am afraid
She'd go elsewhere to have her dresses made.

"Besides, she'd ask about your father, dear.
We couldn't tell her why he is not here.
She's never felt the cold, she could not know
How terrible it was for us to go
Without a fire that cold December night,
When, for the baby's life, we had to fight.

"I'm sure that she could never understand
Why he took life and liberty in hand,
And went and stole the coal for us to burn,
Because he had no way the price to earn.
I'm sure she'd think your father was to blame—

Not the police, who shot and made him lame.
If I could but have taken care of him,
Have dressed and bandaged up the injured limb,
He might have suffered less of weary pain,
Might have, some day, been well and strong again;
But with poor food and care, in prison there,
He never can again life's burdens bear.

" 'Twas such an awful price he had to pay,
For carrying a sack of coal away;
And we must pay still more all down the years
In over-work, in sickness, pain and tears.
Here comes the lady now, so run away,
And I'll call you and brothers presently.

* * * * * * * * * *

"Here, Mildred, go and pay this on the rent;
I'm sorry that it will not leave a cent.
She didn't pay what she agreed she would;
She said the work was anything but good.

"But dry your tears, dear children, down the street
Comes our good angel with her tired feet,
And smiles and tears and sympathy and, too,
A dish of berries ripe for each of you."
'Twas just a neighbor from across the way;
She'd labored in the laundry all the day
And came as usual at even-tide,
With these, her scanty earnings, to divide.

Some people strive for honors, some for fame;
Some barter gold to win a lordly name,
To leadership and prestige some aspire—
Ambitious are to ever soar still higher.
Some train the voice to most ethereal flights,
Some on the mount of knowledge pose as lights;
But where the rays of heaven's searchlights fall,
This humble laundry maid outshines them all.

IN A HUNDRED YEARS

The world will not know in hundred years
What have been your beliefs, your doubts or fears—
Whether you laughed or shed bitter tears.

It will matter not how your hair was dressed;
If you kept up in fashion with the best,
Or went to the theater with the rest.

It will matter not if a friend has slighted—
Has done you a wrong that has not been righted,
Or your aspirations have been blighted.

But the words you speak and the deeds you do,
Though your heart be cruel, or kind and true,
Will live for centuries after you.

Lives may be happy, or dull and sad,
People be good, or go to the bad
Through the influence over them you have had.

Some may be sent to the prison cell,
Others be sickly who might have been well,
On account of your influence. Who can tell?

So love humanity, great and small,
Don't say the words you would fain recall,
But always do what is best for all.

MY DREAM OF THE WAR

Last night in my dreams I was over in Europe—
I saw in the trenches the dead soldiers lie;
I saw on the battle-fields, sodden and gory,
Pale faces upturned to the bleak winter sky.

And I thought as I looked on this sad desolation,
Can no consolation, no respite be found?
For I never could see that fame, honor or glory
Could recompense men buried under the ground.

I noticed the face of a stalwart young Cossack—
The high, noble brow and the chin firm and square.
These seemed to bespeak him a foe to oppression,
A champion of those bowed with labor and care.

I saw in my dream the Czar's mighty dominion,
The hand of the law unrelenting and sure.
'Tis better for him than the mines of Siberia—
Death, rather than banishment, he could endure.

Lying close to the Russian a young Irish laddie,
In the clearly cut features and bonny brown hair,
I recognized one I had known as a neighbor,
And I shuddered to see him so cold lying there.

Good hearted and honest, obliging and truthful,
A typical son of the Emerald Isle;
But the nations need revenue from the rum traffic,
This brave son of Erin strong drink could beguile.

And 'twere better to die at behest of the monarchs,
Who quarrel when compromise bloodshed would save,
Than to live soiled and smirched by foul liquor's pollution,
And die at the last as King Alcohol's slave.

So on down the line, Frenchman, Briton and Balkan,
Still faces bore record of master-class greed;
The war for existence, the fight for a pittance—
The struggle is over, at last they are freed.

What, then! Shall men welcome grim war's desolation
To free them from hunger, oppression and pain?
Nay, rather let reason and justice and temperance,
And brotherly kindness and equity reign.

Philanthropist, stop running 'round with that basket!
Not one crumb for each of the millions who faint,
Or are driven insane by the stress of their labors,
Or perish unaided without a complaint.

O, Christian, get busy! Stop dreaming of heaven!
Get on the aggressive, forget your defense!
Your weapon, the ballot—defeat the oppressor;
Your civic adviser, just good, common sense.

WAITING FOR THE DAWN

In the dusk of early morning,
I am waiting for the dawn;
All impatient I am growing,
As the time drags slowly on.

Waiting, but I dare not slumber,
Lest the morning dawn apace,
And I miss the train at daybreak,
For there's not a moment's grace.

At the station now I'm waiting,
Signs of morning streak the sky,
And I hear a distant rumbling—
Soon a train comes rushing by.

In the opposite direction
It is bound, and still I wait.
Now a whistle shrill is sounding,
But 'tis just a rumbling freight.

So I take my pen and paper,
For my oracle says "Write;"
And before I realize it,
Here's the train and broad daylight.

While we're waiting for the dawning
Of a brighter, better day,
When the roaring of the cannon
And the smoke shall pass away,

We must work—we cannot slumber
As the days and weeks drag on—
Try to light this darkest hour
That comes just before the dawn.

Warnings sound, and lights are flashing,
And we think the time draws near.
Hope and faith are intermingled
With misgiving, doubt and fear.

Military tact and genius,
  Armies drilled and furnished well,
Never will these questions settle—
  Will but prove that "War is hell."

Rumored plans of arbitration
  Are the streakings of the light,
That give promise of the morning
  At the end of darkest night.

Shall the day dawn bright and cloudless,
  Or will the horizon bear
Clouds so ominous and dusky,
  Marring all that's good and fair?

Cease to talk of Christian warfare.
  Teach that cruelty and fight,
Relics are of savage ages—
  Flags and drums don't make them right.

Shoulder-straps and brazen buttons,
  Military pomp and pride,
Stained with blood and smirched with murder,
  Want and woe and suicide,

Don't appeal to those who're longing
  For a more enlightened day.
Ere it comes these brutal customs
  Must forever pass away.

THE OLD BRONCHO'S STORY

The December wind was blowing
O'er the Uncompahgre hills.
Snow-clad was the fertile valley,
Ice-bound were the mountain rills.
Snug and cozy sat the farmer
By his blazing pinion fire;
Lazily he watched the smoke wreaths
From his pipe curl high and higher.

And he felt no pangs of conscience
As he sat there snug and warm,
Tho' he'd left a poor, old work-horse
Standing out in cold and storm.
Shrill and loud the north wind whistled
O'er the frozen country bleak,
And the shivering, suffering creature
Thought these words, he could not speak:

"North wind, do have mercy on me,
For my master shows me none.
To deserve such cruel treatment,
I would know what I have done.
Twenty years I've labored for him,
Many a furrow I have plowed;
Oft he's let me thirst for water—
Scanty food was I allowed.

"Far on many a weary journey
I have borne him safe and sound,
Yet when I was worn and jaded
I no mercy with him found.
With his spurs my flanks he goaded,
Cruelly he jerked the rein,
As I bore him swiftly onward,
Over valley, hill and plain.

"I recall a celebration
Once upon the glorious 'Fourth;'
Men did honor to our Nation
Torturing the helpless horse.
'Vicious bronchos,' as they called us,
Were selected for the sport,
But the vice was in the rider,
Plain to see, and not the horse.

"They must ride the bucking broncho—
How they tortured, spurred and jerked.
For the prize that had been offered,
Each one like a demon worked.
Blood was dripping from our bridles,
While our flanks with gore were red;
I wonder that a bolt from heaven
Did not strike the villains dead.

"How I suffer now from hunger,
No one knows, or cares to know.
All the dried-up range afforded,
Now is covered deep with snow.
E'en for water I must suffer—
Frozen are the ditches all.
Hungry, thirsty, cold and suffering,
No one heeds my plaintive call."

The old broncho groaned and trembled,
For his griefs were almost o'er.
On the frozen ground he stretched him—
Thought about his cares no more.
Mid the sleet and snow next morning,
That upon the ground were spread,
There the cruel-hearted rancher
Found the faithful creature dead.

THE NEWSBOY'S LAMENT

I just get tired of livin',
  Though I'm only ten years old.
The summer sun's so scorchin',
  An' the winter wind's so cold.

I'm sick of sellin' papers,
  An' there's nothin' else to do,
An' my mother's poor an' weakly,
  An' my little sister, too.

It's sure hard on a feller
  To tramp the streets all day,
An' then to go to night-school,
  While other fellers play.

We newsboys make a business
  Of helpin' fellers out—
I went without my lunch today
  To help Bill on his route.

We were passin' by the windows,
  Filled with splendid things to eat;
We never have no dainties,
  Nor no butter, eggs nor meat.

We get so tired of taters,
  An' the apples looked so good;
We never could afford them,
  Though we always wished we could.

An' at last we couldn't stand it—
  Tho' we knew it was a sin,
We took some big, red apples,
  An' the cop, he run us in.

That Adolph Hill was walkin'
  Along the street one day,
A-going to the concert
  To hear the music play.

An' he laughed at us poor fellers,
'Cause our clothes were all in rags,
So we licked him, an' the copper
Jerked us up an' called us "vags."

We should be kind an' honest,
An' grow to be good men,
'Cause the feller that is crooked
Gets landed in the pen.

But it's mighty hard, I tell you,
When you're cold an' hungry, too,
An' you haven't any rain-coat,
Nor a glove nor overshoe.

You get so tired of sufferin',
With no better things in sight,
That you steal an' swear an' "hookey,"
'Cause you can't do what is right.

One day I took some oranges,
An' I heard a lady say,
"Look there!" to a policeman,
But I made my get-away.

She was dressed in silks an' satins,
An' I heard her tell the cop,
That I'd surely go to prison,
'Less those wicked ways I'd stop.

Then she squeezed her little poodle,
An' went on down the street;
Her little dog don't have to steal
To get good things to eat.

I wonder how she'd like it
If she would have to be,
So tired an' cold an' hungry
An' discouraged, too, like me.

But I 'spose no one can help it—
If they could they surely would,
For the church folks always tell us
That they want us to be good.

LITTLE JIM'S CHRISTMAS

Alone with face so pale and sad,
Sat weary, little Jim;
No luxuries to make him glad,
No Christmas joys for him;
No mother's kiss nor fond embrace,
Nor voice so sweet and mild—
Despair had marked the little face
Of this poor, crippled child.

Along the street a couple passed,
A little boy they led.
"I'm tired of every kind of toys,"
The little fellow said.
"O, papa, see that little boy;
Say, let us go inside,
Ask him what he'd like to have,"
The little fellow cried.

Into the dingy room they stepped,
A dark and cheerless place.
Such wistfulness they ne'er beheld
As in that little face.
"Just tell us for a Christmas gift
What you would have us bring."
"I'd like a home," the child replied,
"The best of anything."

They sought the drunken father then—
He quickly gave consent,
So to this lonely, cheerless life
Came joy and glad content.
No nobler deed could crown the day
On which our Lord was born—
A home and parents' love alway
For this poor child forlorn.

THE BOY WITH THE SMILING EYES

O, the bonny boy with the smiling eyes,
Have you seen him yet today?
If you're feeling despondent the sight of him
Will drive your blues away.
He brings good cheer on the darkest day,
He's never a nuisance, nor in the way—
The boy with the smiling eyes.

Go where he will among mankind,
His welcome is always sure.
The hardest trial or toughest lot
He cheerfully will endure.
He boosts the traveler along the way,
By the helpful things he will do and say—
The boy with the smiling eyes.

His is not the patronizing grin
Of the office-seeking bum;
Nor yet the smile of the man who tries
To drown his cares in rum.
But 'tis jolly cheer and genuine mirth,
Which means good-will to all on earth,
That beams from the smiling eyes.

But if some story of human woe
Our hero should chance to hear,
You might behold in the shining depths,
A glistening, manly tear.
O, the soul that is hidden beneath those orbs,
What love and sympathy it absorbs,
And reflects in those shining eyes.

THE BROKEN WING

Dear pigeon with the broken wing,
You're such a woeful little thing.
I see you stand so wistful by,
And watch the other pigeons fly.

Then hopelessly you look around,
And flutter swift along the ground,
You gaze so longing at the skies,
And then again you try to rise.

What was it broke your little wing?
Some cruel boy with stone and sling?
Or did some accident befall
When you were helpless, young and small?

The boy that hurled the cruel stone
That broke your little pinion bone,
Would sure repent if he could see
Your constant, daily misery.

The wing is healed and does not pain,
But to your mind time and again
Comes disappointment, sharp and keen,
And bitter anguish, too, I ween.

And so it is with mortal man—
He nurses many a cherished plan,
That to perfection he would bring,
But finds he has a broken wing.

So oft it is a cruel stone
Has wickedly been aimed and thrown;
He gazes longing at the prize,
But finds he's powerless to rise.

He sees the masses in their need,
Held down by prejudice and greed;
And yet no way can he devise
To show the truth to blinded eyes.

As through the wilderness he winds,
The path to Calvary he finds;
And in Golgotha's dreary gloom
His hopes are buried in the tomb.

But Christ's compassion cannot die,
Nor in the grave long silent lie;
And Jesus' power and might are given,
The angel says, "Lo! He has risen!"

No cruel rock, tho' hurled apace
Can ever break the wings of faith.
And resurrected hope shall soar,
Hampered by doubts and fears no more.

This generation would not pass
'Till all were free, but now, alas!
'Tis as it was in Jesus' time—
They trust not, but demand a sign.

No more would rum their prospects blight,
Nor brothers die in cruel fight,
If each, one vote would rightly cast,
The slaves would all be free at last.

The power that breaks the chains of sin
And brings the wand'rer home again,
Can strike the shackles from the slave—
The desperate, starving millions save.

THE WINTER WIND

Moan on, ye wintry winds!
  Whistle your sad refrain;
You tell of blighted hopes,
  Of efforts all in vain.
Sing your sad requiem,
  Mourn for the total sum
Of golden opportunities,
  That never more will come.

Roar through the rocking pines;
  Sob through the leafless trees.
How different your refrain
  From that of the summer breeze!
It whispers of love and home,
  Of birds in a leafy nest,
But you fill the heart with grief—
  The mind with a wild unrest.

You tell of the snow-clad wastes,
  Where cattle search in vain
For shelter, water and food,
  As they roam o'er the dreary plain.
The cruelty and the greed
  Of man is depicted there,
For in Nature's store-house wide
  There is plenty for all, and to spare.

In the darksome hours of night
  You wake us with whistle shrill,
To think of the weary slaves
  Of factory, mine and mill.
They toil through the midnight hours,
  They shiver with chill and cold,
While plutocrat bosses sleep,
  And dream of their hoarded gold.

All on through the weary years
You say some must go alone—
Must wipe away other's tears,
But pay no heed to their own.
Perhaps it is better thus,
For surely the good Lord knows,
When people are happy themselves,
They forget about others' woes.

O, wind of the wintry night,
You cannot always blow,
And carry your burden white,
Of cold and drifting snow;
And hearts that are heavy and sad,
Some surcease will have from pain,
When the songs of the birds are glad,
When summer comes again.

RHYMES FOR THE FARMER

(Written in Colorado on an occasion of the first snow storm of the season.)

Come, farmers, all with one accord,
If stable room you lack,
Get busy with the straw and poles,
The wire and gunny-sack.

For summer's gone and autumn's fled—
The air's no longer warm,
And helpless creatures look to you,
For shelter from the storm.

The anxious cow looks all around,
A good wind-break to find;
But lumber's piled beside the barn—
A wagon stands behind.

Clear them away, and give the cow
The preference instead;
She ought to have a stable, warm—
At any rate a shed.

That little calf, penned up alone,
In growth would pay you back,
If o'er that opening you'd nail
A good, thick gunny-sack.

Those pigs, so damp and cold, would prove
The truth of Nature's law,
If you would let them snuggle
In a nice, thick bed of straw.

The faithful dog that guards your door—
Give him a box and bed,
If kennel you have none, and see
That he is amply fed.

That aged horse you feel that you
Cannot afford to feed,
Then let a kindly bullet
End his suffering and need.

Don't let the fowls freeze comb and toes,
Exposed to cold and storm.
The hen that lays the golden egg
Is fed and sheltered warm.

Even the wee canary needs
A little extra care—
Wrap up his cage at night and see
That he has seeds to spare.

Don't say you cannot shelter give,
Because the price you lack;
Get busy with the straw and poles,
The wire and gunny-sack.

The best and noblest in the land—
Most prosperous, too, you'll find,
Are those who to the helpless are
Considerate and kind.

WOUNDED

What shall I do with you, poor little bird?
I simply cannot decide,
For that boy with a gun has broken your leg,
And clipped your wing, beside.

Then another half-drowned and tortured you,
'Till I rescued you, cold and wet,
And I stand and hold you for half an hour,
And am undecided yet.

I stand and gaze as one struck dumb,
With horror and wonder, too,
That civilized boys of tender years,
Such fiendish things could do.

Poor little bird, the fright and pain
Have rendered you desperate quite;
You tremble and cling with your little claw
To my hand with all your might.

The dear little children crowd around,
With tears in their tender eyes,
Their genuine sorrow and deep concern,
Too innocent to disguise.

"O, bring it home, we'll give it seeds,
And some water and some bread,
And gather soft grass to make it a nest,"
One dear little lassie said.

Sweet little angels, they do their best,
But nothing on earth can bring,
The missing leg to its place again,
Nor heal the crippled wing.

The cage is a prison—it looks and longs
As its comrades fly and sing;
O, poor little bird, it is doubly hard
To die in the joyous spring.

Do we wonder the earth is soaked with blood,
That wholesale murder is rife,
When such horrible deeds are done by boys
In the spring-time of their life.

And what shall we do with the crippled ones,
Who must suffer through all the years?
O, how can we comfort their broken hearts,
Or dry their bitter tears?

The kind and compassionate of the earth,
Must ever suffer and toil,
To try to undo the awful work
Of those who murder and spoil.

RHYMES FOR MOTHERS

I know you'll agree with me, mother and wife,
That there's nothing so precious as human life;
And in a great measure you hold in your hand
The lives of your dear ones for, at your command,
The little ones breathe either fresh air or bad—
Your moods will make happy, or cause to be sad,
The household you love better far than your life,
If you are the ideal mother and wife.

Your troubles are many, your patience is tried—
You must manage and plan, love and labor beside;
You are jury and judge, and the little one's plea
Must not be ignored, for he plainly can see
An act of injustice. A punishment rash
Might shatter his faith with a terrible crash.
All this must the mother consider and see,
For there's health for the household in sweet harmony.

In training the children, in school or at home,
Experience has taught that occasions will come
When the "big stick" is needed and has to be used,
But the practice of whipping should not be abused.
When ready to whip, put yourself in the place
Of the childish offender, the dear little face
Will appeal to your tact and diplomacy then—
If you have pondered twice, you will think once again.

My two-year-old darling I chided one day,
For wading in water while out at her play.
She said sweetly smiling, my love to enlist,
"I don't need to be whipped; I need to be kissed."
Don't laugh at the boy when he sheds a few tears,
Since he was a baby 'tis but a few years.
Fine feelings in boys are not fostered enough—
They can be brave and daring without being rough.

And, mother, don't let your dear, young daughter wed,
Without a fair knowledge of making good bread;
And of washing the clothes and ironing them, too,
And cooking a good old New England stew,
As well as of making good candy and cake—
Let her learn all this for her own sweet sake.
And teach the girl also to mend and to sew,
And to make a nice, little garden grow.

Don't think that you'll have her to marry rich,
So she'll never need cook nor sew a stitch;
For riches, like many other good things,
Are blessed with a pair of ample wings;
And there's nothing so trying, it seems to me,
As a mother just learning the A, B, C,
Of household work when wealth has fled,
And little ones have to be clothed and fed.

The girl may know how to subtract and divide
Complex and compound, do equations beside;
She may parse all the verbs, and decline all the nouns,
Describe all the rivers, locate all the towns;
Know Caesar and Cicero just "like a book"—
'Tis not so important as learning to cook.
For "War slays his millions," some writer has said,
"But the cook her ten millions, with bad food and bread."

But in spite of all care, and of love in the home,
Diseases and accidents oftentimes come.
Cures learned from experience, I give to you here—
They are harmless and good, you may use without fear.

Just slippery elm bark made into a tea,
And then freely drank is a good remedy
For dropsy as well as for kidney disease—
From pain and from danger 'twill bring a surcease.

With neuralgia in feet one had suffered for years—
The pain so severe that it often brought tears,
Snow liniment rubbed a half-hour each day,
Inside of two months took the pain all away.

A teaspoon of salt, of hot water a cup
When you rise in the morning, if you will drink up,
Will cure a bad stomach in just a few weeks—
Will make you feel fine, put a flush on your cheeks.

For a burn or a scald, I would have you to know,
There is nothing so good as a rich biscuit dough;
Or just flour and water with plenty of grease—
Bind it on thick and the pain will soon cease.

If you're nervous and sleepless there's nothing so fine,
As hot fomentations applied to the spine;
Or just a good rub all along the back bone,
Will cause you to sleep, to the system give tone.

If a finger is crushed or an ankle is sprained,
If a muscle is wrenched or a tendon is strained,
Immerse in hot water, the best thing on earth—
There are times when this knowledge a fortune is worth.

In fact, for congestion or pain anywhere,
The blessed hot water should always be there;
A balm for the sufferer, hot water alone—
'Tis a shame that it's not universally known.

For blues and despondency this is the best:
From arduous labors just take a good rest.
"Speak well of your neighbors, think well of yourself,"
As Hubbard said, this is a cure in itself.

EVELYN

(The following poem is a tribute to little Evelyn Williams of Leonard, Colo.)

O, Precious little Evelyn,
  Wee mountain rosebud wild,
We did not know that you were such
  A noble, thoughtful child,
Until a little episode
  Transpired today to show
The sweet compassion of your soul
  That Christ and angels know.

Primroses growing by the bridge
  The little ones had found,
And filled their tiny hands with them,
  But at the distant sound
Of locomotive whistle,
  They had scampered swiftly back,
To where their mothers stood and talked
  Some distance from the track.

But back across the bridge again
  One tiny toddler strayed,
And no real danger threatened her
  As high upon the grade
The engine passed; but Evelyn,
  While tear-dimmed eyes she hid,
Cried, while her lips were pale with fright,
  "Somebody get that kid!"

Sweet Evelyn, so weak and limp,
  I folded in my arms,
And felt I held an angel there,
  With all her heavenly charms.
O, wee humanitarian,
  May heaven e'er forbid
That I forget that pleading cry—
  "Somebody get that kid!"

"God save the State! God save the King!"
Are slogans that have rung,
All down the centuries, and men
Their battle hymns have sung;
Have fought and bled and died to see
Their land of foemen rid,
But nobler this appeal, by far—
"Somebody save that kid."

O, Evelyn, dear Evelyn,
I see you far away,
With soulful eyes and busy hands
At work while others play.
In sweet, unselfish womanhood
Your youthful charms are hid,
But still your watchword then will be—
"Somebody save that kid."

Ten thousand strong march little ones
To factory and mill,
And toil while their bright eyes grow dim,
And germs their bodies fill.
Disease and death are lurking there,
Where other foes are hid,
This Evelyn will see and plead—
"Somebody save that kid."

In Eastern mines frail little boys
So early work and late,
At separating from the coal
The jagged bits of slate.
Her azure eyes will see the wrong,
While tears bedew each lid,
Our heroine again will beg—
"Somebody save that kid."

The fierce and rampant dogs of war
Around you rave and yell,
And little ones are marching
To the tune of "War Is Hell;"
And as you see their buoyant youth
Robbed of its rightful joys,
You raise your voice in firm demand—
"Somebody save our boys!"

O, Evelyn, the path is dark,
  But angels light the way,
For those whom sweet compassion leads
  Where little children stray.
Through vales of toil and tears and pain,
  In storm and tempest wild,
We hear in grave solicitude—
  "Somebody save that child!"

INDIAN VS. "BIG LAND AND WATER MAN"

(Written in 1908 on the occasion of a friend losing his homestead through graft.)

Who are stealing from the settlers
Of the fair Imperial Vale?
Not the Spaniard nor the bandit,
Nor the Indian on the trail.
They respect the sturdy settler,
They have seen him at his toil,
As he leveled down the hummocks,
Broke the rich and virgin soil.

They have seen his wife and children
Camping on the desert sand,
Through the burning heat of summer
Trying to "hold down" the land;
Bravely bearing toil and hardship,
Drinking many a bitter cup,
Looking forward to that brighter,
Better time of "proving up."

Some four centuries ago now,
Just across in Mexico,
Castile's banner waved protecting
Over many a bungalow,
Where was heaped the stolen treasure,
Hoarded by the sons of Spain,
But her offspring in this desert
Will not take the settlers' gain.

Indian may be "heap much hungry,"
He may need an ax or spade,
But Imperial Valley settlers
Never need to be afraid
That their hen-roosts will be looted,
That they cannot chop their wood,
For Petoodleday and Cheedle
Wouldn't rob them if they could.

But the man who holds the office,
Deals in water and in land,
Lacks the honor of the Spaniard
Or the copper-colored man,
And he envies the poor settler—
The results of all his toil—
For he sees unbounded riches
In Imperial's fertile soil.

So his evil brain devises
Many a nefarious plan,
Whereby he may rob the settler
Of his hard-earned piece of land;
And when error "chance" to happen
In the various deals in dust,
Let the "ring" charge up the settler—
He will pay it, for he must.

But a day is surely coming
When we all make "final proof"—
When a two by six is deeded
For each mortal's earthly use.
'Mong the settlers of this valley
No accuser will be found,
To debar the honest Indian
From his "happy hunting ground."

CHRISTMAS

O, Chistmas! Blessed Christmas!
Our Savior's natal day,
We're carried back across the years
To lands so far away.

We see Him as an infant,
So helpless, small and weak;
His blessed mother, too, is there,
So hopeful, pure and meek.

Yet painters of Madonna,
Portraying Mary's smile,
Have made it pensive, sweetly sad,
Yet beautiful the while.

O, mother heart so tender,
You saw adown the years—
You knew His yearnings for mankind,
Beheld His bitter tears.

That little form so tender,
There cradled in your arms,
With all its helpless loveliness,
With all its baby charms,

Must grow to stalwart manhood,
Must sorely tempted be,
Must work, and weep, and suffer death
On the accused tree.

Yet not the taunts of heartless men,
Nor crown of thorns so sharp,
Nor torture of the cruel nails
Nor spear thrust in the heart,

Gave Him the deepest anguish,
Caused Him the sharpest pain—
But to know for countless millions
He must live and die in vain.

They cannot see His beauty,
They cannot hear Him say,
"Take up thy cross and follow me,"
For the world is in their way.

The blare of earthly trumpets,
The roll of worldly drums,
Sound in the ears that cannot hear
The precious voice that comes.

To bid us feed the hungry,
To visit prisons, too—
These are the "greater things"
That He intended we should do.

But cursed war and greed of gold
Go stalking hand in hand—
Commercialism holds its bloody
Scepter o'er the land.

All hail the birthday of the man,
Who did not live for self!
Who cared not for the world's acclaim,
For honor, fame nor pelf.

His blessed hands' tho' weary,
Lifted up the sick and maimed—
Tho' cruel shafts of hatred
By the ruling class were aimed.

How few there be that follow Him,
Tho' Christmas bells proclaim,
That "Unto us a Savior's born,"
"Tho' millions name His name.

For recognized evangelists
Are leading men astray,
By teaching to prepare for war,
When Christ would tell them "Nay."

Christ's spirit is compassion,
For the poor and weak and sick,
While these false prophets cater
To the pompous, great and rich.

And "Peace on earth, good-will to men,"
We hope for all in vain;
'Twill not be found upon the earth,
While graft and vengeance reign.

SACRIFICED

Dear little boy with the freckled face,
And the ragged pantaloons;
Since you were but a baby small
It has been but a few brief moons;
But you're rousted about from pillar to post,
And nobody seems to care,
For the poor, little boy with the freckled face
And the shock of auburn hair.

The small, yellow dog that you love so well,
Your constant companion, too,
They kick and cuff just to make you cry,
And to see what you will do;
And then they laugh with a big guffaw
When you shake your wee fist and swear,
And tell you your temper bad is caused
By the color of your hair.

Even your father seems to think
You're just a plaything for him;
He holds you over the roaring falls
With threats that he'll throw you in;
He gives you coffee and beer to drink,
And a cigarette to smoke,
And when you are pale and sick from these,
He laughs at the rousing joke.

And now at last poor, dear little boy,
You are ready to go to school,
And it's up to you to show the boys
That you are "nobody's fool."
Of course, your initiation comes,
And nobody interferes;
It's a custom, you see, that's been handed down
From the boys of former years.

You're teased and pestered on every hand,
'Till your temper is ruined quite;
You're on the defensive every day,
And ready for a fight.
By nature you're kind and compassionate,
But they make you cruel and rough,
And everybody about the town
Has got you branded tough.

You have to grow up poor, dear little boy,
For the swift years come and go,
And they sing, "Just give the boy a chance,"
But you don't find it so.
In a general fight a man is killed,
And they lay all the blame on you,
And you haven't the personality
That you need to pull you through.

Others more guilty are, but you
The brunt of it all must bear,
For the jury don't fancy your freckled face,
And the Judge doesn't like your hair;
And the crowd will swerve to the popular side,
Nor reason nor care nor think—
Prosperity prospers the wide world o'er,
And the under dog may sink.

This is the rule, it has ever been,
And we know that it e'er will be,
'Till true Christianity takes the place
Of the hateful sham we see.
Thinkers are few. The thousands live
Just to be entertained—
Why this is true in a Christian land,
Never has been explained.

THE REFORMER SUICIDE

Yes, he was weary, was tired of life—
Sick of its problems, its labor and strife;
Tired of earning that others might spend,
Of finding a foe when he needed a friend;
Tired of giving that others might take,
Renouncing ideals for other folks' sake,
Who realized not the keen pain that it brought,
And set all his high aspirations at naught.
Misunderstood, misconstrued what he said,
Censured the authors whose writings he read;
Antagonized him in all that he planned,
Simply because they could not understand.

Weary of waiting and hoping in vain,
Longing for sunshine mid torrents of rain;
Tired of troubles within and without,
That tortured his soul, drove his spirit about
On the wild, tossing waves of life's troublesome sea,
With no kindred spirit near, no sympathy.
Beautiful visions by day and by night,
Of bitter wrongs vanquished, of triumph of right,
Passed through his mind as he hoped for the day,
When oppression and wrong would no longer hold sway;
But he daily saw reason o'erruled by brute force—
The boy with the burro, the man with the horse;
The dear little child, dwarfed in body and mind,
The youth drove to crime and to prison consigned;
The rich making merchandise out of the poor,
Men driven insane by the strain they endure.
Might making right all around he perceived—
Deplored these conditions and constantly grieved.

Pondered and thought, but could not reconcile,
A Providence just, with conditions so vile.
With nature too fine for this coarse, cruel sphere,
With highest ideals, unrealized here,
Tired of hearing of war and of strife,
Weary of all of it—tired of life.

TO SAN QUENTIN PRISON FOR LIFE

There is a boy down in San Quentin Prison for life.

Your boy may hail the sun every morning, romp and play, enjoy the songs of the birds, revel in fields of flowers, eat the luscious fruits of this "land of fruit and blossom," enjoy life in every way, without even a thought of thankfulness or appreciation. You are here to provide for him, to protect him, to see that he does right, that he keeps out of bad company, that he is not learning to be criminal by practicing cruelty upon birds or animals or weaker boys, that he doesn't learn to smoke or drink, and that no one imposes upon him.

This poor boy was unfortunate from the beginning. Heredity, prenatal influence and environment were all against him. His father, because Nature had not endowed him with wits as keen as those of the grasping real estate agent with whom he had to deal, was cheated out of his hard-earned farm. He was destitute and discouraged, despondent and unkind. He gave no encouragement or praise to the sick, weary, disheartened wife who shared with him a bare existence.

When the tiny mite of humanity came to share their misery and want, it was little wonder it was unwelcome. Its little form, dressed in the coarsest of clothing and wrapped in an old, faded shawl, was a constant reminder of added work and care.

It is true that sometimes there are sublime characters, who, in spite of the most abject poverty, love and cherish their offspring with an undying devotion. But Fate was less kind to this unfortunate couple.

Finally the little boy, already dwarfed in mind and body from lack of nutritious food, warm clothing, proper care and love (that divine thing that is as essential to a child as sunshine is to a plant), was sent to school, there to be teased and tormented because his clothes were shabby and out of style, because his ears were "lopped" from wearing his father's old hat, and because he felt his own inability to command respect.

Every day was a torture to him.

Oh, teacher! Why didn't you find the soul of that little boy and lead it into the light? Protect it from the jeers of the strong, heartless, tyrannical children of the "better class?"

But he must not tell you his troubles, even when the poor, little heart was breaking with its burden. He must not "tattle" and make trouble for you.

But your opportunity is gone forever. You cannot recall those golden hours when you might have snatched a soul from the jaws of death.

He must take whatever of ridicule and abuse he got. No wonder he grew up thinking that heaven and earth, God and man, even the stars of the firmament, were all against him.

Once he ventured to tell a young girl that he loved her (and she had listened to worse young men), but instead of a kindly refusal, such as a young girl of true refinement would have given him if she did not care to accept him, she ridiculed him and held him up as an object of derision for her heartless friends. She had never been taught any better. She did not know that such conduct was not only weak and silly, but criminal.

This unfortunate young man was finally driven from home by a drunken father, and as his poor mother had, many years before, given up the struggle and gone the way of all the earth, he was friendless and alone.

Once a noble-hearted woman noticed his sad face, spoke kindly and cheerily to him, and noted the quick appreciation in his eyes; but their paths lay apart, and not one person, aside from her, ever gave him a kindly, sympathetic word, or really cared for his well-being.

Finally in an unguarded moment of distraction, when, unfortunately, the planets helped to augment his state of mind, in revenge for an actual wrong and indignity, such as had been heaped upon him ever since his unwelcome advent into life, he dealt a fatal blow to his tormentor, and now he pays the penalty that should be paid by the voters who uphold the system that impoverished his father and rendered his life accursed; by his teacher who

failed to protect him from abuse, and by every one who persecuted him. But he is buried in the prison and forgotten by them all.

The great mills of time and toil grind on, the years come and go, bringing the holidays, on which those who have wronged him feast and make merry.

The New Year means nothing to him, for it brings no new opportunities. Easter comes, but he has no interest in a risen Christ, for he feels that those who profess to know Christ take no interest in him, do not "suffer bondage" nor "weep" with him.

Decoration Day reminds him that he will never pluck another flower, and that no one will ever lay a blossom upon his grave.

Independence Day comes, but he has no liberty to celebrate. The government under which he lives is an absolute despotism.

Thanksgiving Day is the worst mockery of all. He has nothing to be thankful for.

On Christmas he reflects that he has never had any "peace on earth," and that no one ever showed him "goodwill;" and that had they done so, all might now be different.

And he must endure this for life—for more or less, as Fate fixes it, of monotonous, maddening existence.

And he is only one of many thousands.

Yet our system remains the same. We make the criminal, then we blame, we censure, we subject to the third degree; we heap calumny upon the head of the accused man, we banish to the prison cell the man created in the image of his Maker; we forget him there and go on with our business and revelry, oblivious to his suffering—go on just as they did in medieval Rome, 'till the swift cycles of Time whirl us before the Great Judge of all the world, and there, face to face with the multiplied millions who have languished in the prisons of the earth, we will stand to render our account!

INCARNATE CHRIST

O, let us try to see the Christ in man,
Nor crucify the Son of God afresh,
And put Him to an open shame because
We recognize Him not here on the earth.
For if we ever knew Him, we can see
Him shining in the liquid depths of eyes,
Beseeching us for human sympathy.

O, man, so lost to Christ's compassion sweet!
So bound to cold conventionalities—
To forms so dead, so cruel, so corrupt,
And yet we, in our blindness, our conceit,
Think that they form a part of virtue fair—
Believe that they refine and civilize.

We tend and prune and cultivate so well,
The very things that curse and spoil our lives—
That bind our children in the galling chains,
That fret and wear, enslave and madden them,
'Till breaking every bond in desperate mood.
Often the ones to freedom most inclined
Make a bold, rash and headlong leap,
And crashing down the idols reared around
The old and venerated family tree,
Relics of superstitious, by-gone times,
They shock us into sanity, and then
We breathe the air of Nature's rational man.

But soon the roar of business and the strife
For honor, and for prestige, and for pelf,
Sound in our ears once more, and then again
We plunge into the whirl of business life,
And struggle on unloving and unloved,
Because we see not Christ in mortal man.

The eyes of little children looking up
To catch responsive sympathy and love,
See only stern reproof, where oftentimes
They crave and need the loving look and word.

Every heart-ache eased and sadness cheered,
Yea! every gloomy prospect made more bright
Is an expression of the Christ within.
Say not vain words of servile flattery,
To gain the favor of the Christ who said,
"As sure as ye have done good unto these.
My brethren, ye have done it unto me."
But see in man the dear, incarnate Christ,
And say to him the blessed words of cheer.
Not only in the man on bended knee,
In supplication at a throne of grace,
Not only priest and prelate, he who makes
Profession of a Christian heart and life,
But in the lowliest laborer who lends
A helping hand to his poor, toiling friend.
Look for incarnate Christ in all you meet,
In every one who walks upon the earth—
Even the criminal behind the bars,
Made often so by others' unkind deeds;
But in whose inmost heart dwells sympathy
To the extent that he can make a pet
Of such a lowly creature as a mouse,
As Oppenheimer* did, and cherish it,
And daily watch its coming to his cell;
And when, at last, one day it fell a prey
To the jailkeeper's cruel, thoughtless cane,
Weep and lament the loss of this, his friend—
The only living thing that he might love.

And when its softening influence was removed,
And the maddening confinement in his cell,
The dread monotony, improper food
And everything a high-strung nature loathes,
Caused him in desperation once again
To strike another frantic, fatal blow,
His life must pay the penalty extreme.
That life, that had men seen in early years
The Christ that in him dwelt and loved the same,
This "desperate criminal" ne'er would have been.

*Oppenheimer is supposed to have been one of California's most desperate criminals.

We pray, "O, God, thy kingdom come on earth!"
And when it comes our blind eyes see it not.
What we call Justice oftentimes is graft.
Commercialism holds the world enthralled
Within its cruel, deadly, iron grip,
And throttles with its unrelenting hand
The church, the courts of justice of the land.
The pedagogue who surely feels and knows
What should be taught the child in public school,
How plastic natures should be molded, but
Who dares not act as conscience bids him do,
Lest his position be the sacrifice.

O, Christ, nowhere in this great universe
Do you shine forth as in the lives of those
Who, meeting sore oppression, dare to stand
In spite of cruel jibe and coward's taunt,
In face of opposition, sore and strong,
In face of wrath and malice hurled apace,
Or deadly boycott and of slander vile
And always ever and anon uphold
The cause of the down-trodden and the weak.

Away with creeds that steel and brutalize!
Christ's spirit never was akin to such.
Up with compassion's banner, fling it wide!
Let men and angels love incarnate Christ.

Syracuse, N. Y.
PAT. JAN. 21, 1908

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